



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES

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CITY SAFETY OFFICER

MAIL HANDLING PRECAUTIONS

The risk of contacting any disease from an envelope is extremely low. General awareness of one's surroundings and suspicious mail is appropriate. The following guidelines have been developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the FBI, with minor changes from the Long Beach Police Department to protect crime scene integrity.

General precautions for those who handle large volumes of mail:

- Wash your hands with warm soap and water before and after handling the mail.
- Do not eat, drink, or smoke around mail.
- If you have open cuts or skin lesions on your hands, use of disposable latex or nitrile (for those with latex allergies) gloves may be appropriate.
- Surgical masks, eye protection or gowns are NOT necessary or recommended.

If the letter or package is marked with a threatening message such as "anthrax":

1. Do not shake the package or envelope.
2. Carefully place the package or envelope down on a stable surface.
3. Then LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
4. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading.
5. REPORT the incident to the Police Department using 911.
6. LIST all people who were in the room or area when the suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to the Health Department authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

Envelope with Powder and Powder Spills Out Onto Surface:

1. DO NOT try to CLEAN UP the powder. Carefully place the envelope down on a stable surface. It is important that if it is a hazardous material that it not be blown about or further aerosolized.
2. After completing Step 1 above, LEAVE the room and CLOSE the door, or section off the area to prevent others from entering (i.e., keep others away).
3. WASH your hands with **soap and water** to prevent spreading any powder to your face.
4. REPORT the incident to the Police Department using 911.
5. REMOVE heavily contaminated clothing as soon as possible and place in a plastic bag, or some other container that can be sealed. This clothing bag should be given to the emergency responders for handling.
6. SHOWER with **soap and water** as soon as possible. *Do not use bleach or other disinfectant on your skin*
7. LIST all people who were in the room or area when the suspicious letter or package was recognized. Give this list to the Health Department authorities and law enforcement officials for follow-up investigations and advice.

How to Identify Suspicious Packages and Letters

Some characteristics of suspicious packages and letters include the following:

- Excessive postage
- Handwritten or poorly typed addresses
- Incorrect titles
- Title, but no name
- Misspellings of common words
- Oil stains, discolorations or odor
- No return address
- Excessive weight
- Lopsided or uneven envelope
- Protruding wires or aluminum foil
- Excessive security material such as masking tape, string, etc.
- Visual distractions
- Ticking sound
- Marked with restrictive endorsements, such as "Personal" or "Confidential"
- The city or state in the postmark does not match the return address.

Departments will be responsible for supplying latex or nitrile gloves to employees for protection. Disposable latex or nitrile gloves can be purchased from Glove Tek, Inc. under the City's blanket purchase order #BPLB00000757.

For further information and updates on mail handling recommendations or other information on biological hazards, please see the Department of Health and Human Services webpage.

Should you have any questions, please contact Mike Alio, City Safety Officer, at 8-6476.

Dated: October 24, 2001